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**DETERMINING THE LEVELS OF DEMOCRATIC BELIEF OF PRIMARY SCHOOL  
AND PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS**

**ABSTRACT**

The objective of this study is to determine the levels of democratic belief of the teachers working at primary schools and prospective teachers (4th grade teacher training students). To this end, we applied Non-Democratic Teacher Belief Scale (developed by Schlectman and transformed into Turkish by Kesici) to 327 teachers of primary schools teaching in the city centre of Konya and last grade students (prospective teachers) attending to the department of primary school teaching at the Faculty of Education. It consists of three sub-dimensions: equality, freedom and justice. The results indicate that the prospective teachers have lower level compared to teachers. For the prospective teachers, there is significant difference in terms of gender in three dimensions. The results show that both prospective teachers and teachers need to acquire more democratic attitudes and values in theory and in practice as well.

**Keywords:** Democratic Belief, Prospective Teachers, Teachers, Equality, Freedom, Justice, Teacher Training

**SINIF ÖĞRETMENLERİ VE ÖĞRETMEN ADAYLARININ DEMOKRATİK İNANÇ  
DÜZEYLERİNİN BELİRLENMESİ**

**ÖZET**

Bu araştırmanın amacı sınıf öğretmenliği 4 sınıf öğrencileri ile ilköğretim okullarında görevli sınıf öğretmenlerinin demokratik inanç düzeylerinin belirlenmesidir. Bu amaçla Konya il merkezindeki ilköğretim okullarında görev yapan sınıf öğretmenlerine (236) ve Eğitim Fakültesi sınıf öğretmenliği son sınıf öğrencilerine (327) (öğretmen adaylarına) Z. Shechtman tarafından geliştirilen ve Kesici (2006) tarafından Türkçeleştirilen "Demokratik Olmayan Öğretmen İnanç Ölçeği (DOÖİÖ)" kullanılmıştır. Ölçeğin üç alt boyutu bulunmaktadır. Bunlar; eşitlik, özgürlük ve adalettir. Araştırma sonucunda, öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenlere göre demokratik inanç düzeyleri daha düşük seviyede bulunmuştur. Analiz sonuçlarına göre, öğretmen adaylarında cinsiyete göre üç boyutta da anlamlı farklılık görülmüştür. Öncelikli olarak erkek öğretmen adaylarına ve genelde hem öğretmen adaylarına hem de öğretmenlere demokratik tutum ve davranış kazandırıcı teorik ve uygulamalı olarak bilgi, beceri, tutum ve davranışlar kazandırılmalıdır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Demokratik İnanç, Öğretmen Adayı, Sınıf Öğretmeni, Eşitlik, Özgürlük, Adalet, Öğretmen Eğitimi

## 1. INTRODUCTION (GİRİŞ)

Teachers take significant responsibilities for making democracy, one of the basic features of modern community, a part of life. Roles required by the profession itself in many occupations are described at the working place. However, the roles of teachers are carried on out of school as well. Therefore, as instructors and educators, teachers are to exhibit the role of being examples for their students. Within this context, teachers are supposed to take care of their behaviours towards their students, colleagues, administrators, parents of the students, their families and other individuals concerning their roles both in school and class and out of school.

Teacher has a role of a teacher in the class, a father or mother in the family and an educator in the community. While performing these roles, he takes such responsibilities as being fair towards all individuals, behaving equally to them, supporting freedoms and transforming information to individuals. Teachers should believe democratic ideas while they are performing their roles they have. Having a democratic belief means; believing in the equality of every individual living in the society, the practice of justice equally for each individual and in basic human rights and freedoms. In this way, the concept of democracy can be described as living of a person in a community where justice is shared equally, experiencing equality without any condition, fully and completely and having human rights and freedoms [1]. With the analysis of the concept of democracy, we have three dimensions: equality, justice and freedom [2]. These concepts look like a two-way relationship with a different resemblance. As we take care of equality of individuals in the society, and give their rights as much as they deserve it, the scope of freedom for them is enlarged. As long as equality in a society is paid more attention, individuals feel themselves more freely [3].

There lies freedom in the basis of democracy. Such thinkers as Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, Locke, Espinoza, Roosevelt and so on have put an emphasis on the significance of democracy from the earliest ages of history up to current time. Of the freedom fields on which these thinkers put great emphasis are such rights as living, security, fair judgment, respect to private and family life, freedom of thought, freedom of religion and conscience, getting married and establishing a family [4]. Being able to reach the rights mentioned above should be a need to be sought.

In order to make students have more freedom, a democratic teacher has some duties such as preparing an opportunity for them to utter their feelings and ideas in the class, practicing teaching methods by which they can express themselves, giving students responsibilities they will be able to cope with and leading them towards team work. It was found that teachers with excessive discipline over their students and those limiting their students' fields of freedom have students who do not obey the rules of the school and behave aggressively and violently [5]. A democratic teacher should discipline his/her students with a sense of democratic discipline in the class and create an opportunity where students could always act more freely.

Justice should be obtained for a free society and a free individual. There is a need to clarify the concept of equality in order to understand the concept of justice. There is also a need for a democratic education to democratise the relations of politics, economy, individual and family, and a need to make a strong connection between freedom and equality, which are components of a democratic

education. This need can be sustained by freedom and equality completing each other [6].

So as to connect a line between equality and justice and practice justice depending on the principle of equality, we need to analyse the concept of "distributive justice" as the relationship of justice with equality could be established through the concept of distributive justice and the criterion of distributive justice is equality. In addition, it is not an absolute equality but a proportional equality. As Aristotle declared, behaving equally to those who are not equal leads to injustice. Therefore, those who are equal are behaved equally and the ones who are not equal are behaved unequally at distributive justice; everybody benefits from the effort he pays as much as he does depending on the status he occupies within the community and his talents [7].

## **2. RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE (ÇALIŞMANIN ÖNEMİ)**

In order to make the field of freedom expand, particularly that of freedom of thought and expression, and make people believe that they are offered equality of opportunity, it is required that other components of democracy be applied in full sense. In this context, there is a need to determine the levels of democratic beliefs of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students and primary school teachers teaching at primary schools. In this purpose, the teachers teaching in the central towns of the city of Konya and pre-service teachers attending to the department of primary school teaching will be applied the Scale of Non-Democratic Teacher Belief, and whether they will agree with non-democratic beliefs, which are not suitable in the environment of class and school. The sub-problems that the research deals with are:

- What are the levels of non-democratic beliefs of primary school teachers and pre-service teachers in terms of equality, freedom and justice?
- Is there a significant difference between the levels of primary school teachers and pre-service teachers in terms of equality, freedom and justice?
- Is there a significant difference between the levels of primary school teachers and pre-service teachers concerning their genders in terms of equality, freedom and justice?
- Is there a significant different between the levels of non-democratic beliefs and the fact that teachers of primary school and pre-service teachers choose the profession teaching voluntarily, in terms of equality, freedom and justice?

The concept of democracy is considered one of the raising values in this age. It will not be enough to answer it what it is when asked what democracy is as a concept. What is important is to adopt democracy and use it in every stage of our life. Making democracy a way of life is an issue expected in every field of life. Democratic attitudes and behaviours should not only be uttered verbally, but they should also become a way of life. Therefore, it is expected that teachers should practice teaching of democracy as a model at education. The findings to be gathered at the end of the study are expected to have a contribution for the development of democratic behaviours of both teachers teaching and pre-service teachers.

## **3. METHOD (YÖNTEM)**

### **3.1. Sampling (Örnekleme)**

The sampling of the current study consists of 327 teachers of primary schools teaching in the city centre of Konya and last grade

students (pre-service teachers) attending to the department of primary school teaching at the Faculty of Education between the dates of February - March 2008. Students were applied full counting. ... primary schools were listed for the choice of sampling for teachers in the city centre of Konya and 18 schools were chosen randomly out of the list. The number of the primary school teachers teaching in these schools was 446. All of these teachers were given the scale and 252 scales were turned back. 16 scales were not evaluated as they were not answered depending on the instructions, and the data was obtained out of 236 scales.

### **3.2. The Process (Süreç)**

The original for the current study belongs to Z. Shechtman and "Non-Democratic Teacher Belief Scale" (NDTBS), translated by Kesici (2006) was used. In order to examine the structural validity and factorial structure of NDTBS, commentating and verifying factor analysis was used, on the other hand basic components were used as factoring techniques. Basic components analysis was used in order to define factorial structure of NDTBS and the technique of varimax vertical rotation was used depending on this analysis. For the reliability of the scale, Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient was applied. The correlation coefficient was applied for the criterion related reliability of NDTBS. Internal consistency coefficient of the scale was found 0.81. Internal consistency coefficients of the three sub dimensions were found as follows; 0.77 for equality, 0.72 for freedom and 0.72 for justice [3]. 5 items of 34 - item scale were taken out by Kesici. The item of "Asiatic and Afro students have much trouble at science compared to European students" was taken out as it doesn't suit for the facts of Turkey. Therefore, 28 items remained in the scale, in total.

The scale consisted of three sub-dimensions. Total score of these three sub-dimensions gave the score of Non-Democratic Teacher Belief. The sub - dimension of equality had 11 items, while that of freedom had 11 and justice had 6 ones. The belief scores of teachers for each dimension were counted and a total score was obtained concerning their beliefs. Then, a total score was obtained related to the scores obtained from these three sub - dimensions. Scoring for the sub - dimensions of the scale varies from 1 to 5 for each item. 1-1.80 accounted for Totally Disagree, 1.81-2.60 for Disagree, 2.61-3.40 for Partly Agree, 3.41-4.20 for Quite Agree and 4.21-5.00 for Totally Agree, and sub-dimensions of the scale and high level of total scores in terms of the level of non-democratic beliefs shows high level agreement on non-democratic beliefs.

### **3.3. Analysis of Data (Verilerin Analizi)**

SPSS 11.00 package program was used for the analysis of data. Arithmetical mean was used to determine the level of democratic and non-democratic beliefs of teachers and pre-service teachers and t test was applied to find whether there was a difference between the levels of beliefs, and whether they chose the profession of teaching voluntarily was determined through t test.

### **4. FININGS (BULGULAR)**

- What are the levels of non-democratic beliefs of primary school teachers and pre - service teachers in terms of equality, freedom and justice?

Table 1. Dispersion of the scores of non-democratic beliefs of primary school teachers and pre-service teachers

(Tablo 1. Öğretmenlerin ve öğretmen adaylarının demokratik olmayan öğretmen inanç düzeylerinin alt boyutlara göre dağılımı)

NDTBS Sub-Dimensions	Profession	N	$\bar{x}$	S
Equality	Pre-Service	327	2,69	.50
	Teacher	236	2,60	.50
Freedom	Pre-Service	327	2,27	.59
	Teacher	236	2,27	.65
Justice	Pre-Service	327	2,51	.72
	Teacher	236	2,16	.70
Total	Pre-Service	327	2,48	.46
	Teacher	236	2,37	.56

As given in the table, the views of the pre-service teachers at the sub-dimension of NDTBS equality was found as ( $\bar{x}=2.69$ ) while those of teachers at the same dimension were ( $\bar{x}=2.60$ ). As for freedom sub-dimension, pre-service teachers had a score of ( $\bar{x}=2.27$ ) and teachers had ( $\bar{x}=2.27$ ). It was ( $\bar{x}=2.51$ ) for pre-service teacher for the sub-dimension of justice and was ( $\bar{x}=2.16$ ) for teachers The views of pre-service teachers included in the research were found as ( $\bar{x}=2.48$ ) in total, while those of teachers were ( $\bar{x}=2.37$ ).

Depending on the means of the data obtained, it was found that pre - service teachers expressed more non-democratic beliefs at the sub-dimensions of equality, freedom and justice respectively, compared to those of primary school teachers. Democratic belief levels of pre-service teachers were found lower than teachers. This could be explained in such a way that pre-service teachers have less democratic belief than teachers due to the fact that they are at the last grade of their education and that they feel anxiety for the exam to become a teacher.

- Is there a significant difference between the levels of non-democratic beliefs of primary school teachers and pre-service teachers in terms of the sub-dimensions of equality, freedom and justices?

The difference between the levels of non-democratic beliefs of primary school teachers and pre-service teachers included in the research was given at Table 2.

A significant difference was found between the levels of non-democratic beliefs of primary school teachers and pre - service teachers ( $t(445)=2.50, p<.05$ ). There was no difference between the scores of the levels of non-democratic beliefs of primary school teachers and pre - service teachers concerning the sub-dimensions of equality ( $t(452)=1.89, p>.05$ ) and freedom ( $t(442)=.019, p>.05$ ). As for the sub-dimension of justice, there was a significant difference ( $t(514)=5.85, p>.01$ ). As the fact that non-democratic belief scores of pre-service teachers were higher than those of primary school teachers showed that they were at lower levels of democratic beliefs, it is likely to say that pre-service teachers had less democratic belief compared to primary school teachers.

Table 2. The difference between the levels of non-democratic beliefs of primary school teachers and pre-service teachers concerning sub - dimensions

(Tablo 2. Öğretmenlerin ve öğretmen adaylarının demokratik olmayan öğretmen inanç düzeylerinin alt boyutlara göre farklılığı)

NDTBS Sub-Dimensions	Profession	N	$\bar{x}$	S	sd	t	p
Equality	Pre-Service	327	2,69	.50	452,72	1,89	.058
	Teacher	236	2,60	.60			
Freedom	Pre-Service	327	2,27	.53	442,14	.019	.985
	Teacher	236	2,27	.65			
Justice	Pre-Service	327	2,51	.72	514,35	5,85	.000
	Teacher	236	2,16	.70			
Total	Pre-Service	327	2,48	.46	445,98	2,50	.013
	Teacher	236	2,37	.56			

- Is there a significant difference between the levels of non-democratic beliefs of primary school teachers and pre-service teachers in terms of the sub-dimensions of equality, freedom and justices concerning their genders?

The relationship between the levels of non-democratic beliefs of primary school teachers and pre-service teachers included in the research concerning gender was presented at Table 3.

In order to test non-democratic beliefs of teachers and pre-service teachers depending on their gender independent t test technique was applied. Concerning the results of the analysis, a significant difference at three dimensions was found for gender. The agreement of female pre - service teachers on non-democratic beliefs was significantly higher at the sub-dimensions of equality  $t(306)=4.56$ ,  $p<.01$ , freedom  $t(282)=5.40$ ,  $p<.01$  and justice  $t(275)=9.68$ ,  $p<.01$ , and at total score  $t(282)=7.64$ ,  $p<.01$  compared to male pre - service teacher.

No significant difference was found between the levels of non - democratic belief of male and female teachers  $t(196)=1.37$ ,  $p>.05$  in total in terms of their gender. A significant difference was found at the sub-dimension of justice for the agreement of female teachers on non-democratic belief  $t(216)=4.95$ ,  $p<.01$  compared to that of male teachers. The level of non-democratic belief of female teachers was found higher than male teachers in the sub-dimension of justice. No significant difference was found between non-democratic beliefs depending on gender at the sub-dimension of equality  $t(205)=-.675$ ,  $p>.05$  and freedom  $t(197)=.888$ ,  $p>.05$ .

Table 3. The relationship between the levels of non-democratic beliefs of primary school teachers and pre-service teachers included in the research concerning gender

(Tablo 3. Öğretmenlerin ve öğretmen adaylarının cinsiyetine göre demokratik olmayan öğretmen inanç düzeyleri arasındaki ilişki)

	NDTBS Sub-Dimensions	Profession	N	$\bar{x}$	S	sd	t	p
(Pre-service Teacher)	Equality	Male	153	2,83	.52	306	4,56	.000
		Female	174	2,57	.46			
	Freedom	Male	153	2,43	.58	282	5,40	.000
		Female	174	2,12	.44			
	Justice	Male	153	2,88	.73	275	9,68	.000
		Female	174	2,19	.53			
	Total	Male	153	2,68	.48	282	7,64	.000
		Female	174	2,31	.37			
(Teacher)	Equality	Female	114	2,57	.69	205	-,675	.501
		Male	122	2,62	.50			
	Freedom	Female	114	2,31	.77	197	.888	.376
		Male	122	2,23	.52			
	Justice	Female	114	2,38	.74	216	4,95	.000
		Male	122	1,95	.59			
	Total	Female	114	2,43	.66	196	1,37	.170
		Male	122	2,32	.44			

- Is there a significant difference between the levels of non-democratic beliefs of primary school teachers and pre-service teachers in terms of the sub-dimensions of equality, freedom and justices concerning whether they preferred the profession of teaching voluntarily?

The difference of view between whether the primary school teachers and pre-service teachers included in the research preferred the profession voluntarily and their levels of non-democratic beliefs of was given at Table 4.

Table 4. The Difference between whether the primary school teachers and pre-service teachers preferred the profession voluntarily and their levels of non-democratic beliefs

(Tablo 4. Öğretmenlerin ve öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenlik mesleğini isteyerek seçmeleri ile demokratik olmayan öğretmen inanç düzeyleri arasındaki farklılık)

NDTBS Sub-Dimensions (Pre-service Teacher)	Preferring the Profession Voluntarily	N	$\bar{x}$	S	sd	t	p
Equality	Yes	245	2,68	.51	150	-.152	.880
	No	82	2,69	.47			
Freedom	Yes	245	2,24	.54	146	-1.88	.061
	No	82	2,36	.51			
Justice	Yes	245	2,47	.71	133	-1.79	.074
	No	82	2,64	.74			
Total (Teacher)	Yes/No	245	2,46	.47	145	-1.53	.127
		82	2,55	.44			
Equality	Yes	186	2,64	.61	91	2.49	.014
	No	50	2,43	.51			
Freedom	Yes	186	2,27	.67	87	.362	.718
	No	50	2,24	.58			
Justice	Yes	186	2,15	.70	78	-.260	.795
	No	50	2,18	.60			
Total	Yes	186	2,39	.58	87	1,10	.274
	No	50	2,30	.50			

No difference was found between whether the primary school teachers and pre-service teachers preferred the profession voluntarily and their levels of non-democratic beliefs.

##### 5. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS (TARTIŞMA VE ÖNERİLER)

In this study, the levels of democratic beliefs of primary school teachers and pre-school teachers were examined in terms of different variables. Pre-service teachers expressed the item of "Partly Agree" ( $\bar{x}=2.69$ ) concerning the sub-dimension of equality of Non-democratic Teacher Belief Scale while teachers expressed the item of "Strongly Agree" ( $\bar{x}=2.60$ ). Depending on this result, it is likely to say that teacher have more democratic belief at the sub-dimension of equality than pre-school teachers. Concerning the sub-dimensions of freedom and justice, both teachers and pre-service teachers outnumbered on the item of "Disagree". Freedom and justice, sub-dimensions of democratic behaviours, seemed positive for both teachers and pre-service teachers. However, it is thought provoking that pre-service teachers expressed no negative idea at the dimension of equality compared to teachers.

No significant difference was found between the levels of non-democratic teacher beliefs of teachers and pre-service teachers. It could be said that pre-service teachers had less democratic beliefs than teachers. Necessary support should be given to pre-service teachers to make them attain more democratic beliefs at the stages of being trained into the profession teaching.

Significant difference was found at three dimensions between non-democratic beliefs of teachers and pre-service teachers concerning their gender. It was determined that female pre-service teachers had more democratic beliefs than male pre-service teachers. It was also

revealed that male pre-service teachers lacked democratic attitude and behaviours. It was found that the level of democratic belief of female teachers was higher than male teachers at the dimension of justice. It could be thought that male teachers lacked at the dimension of justice. No significant difference was found at the dimensions of equality and freedom of the scale and between non-democratic belief of teachers in general depending on their genders.

Also, no significant difference was determined between whether the teacher and pre-service teachers preferred the profession voluntarily and their level of non-democratic beliefs.

Firstly male pre-service teachers and generally both pre-service teachers and teachers should be made to attain knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours to make them obtain democratic attitude and behaviour both theoretically and practically.

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